

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01
AID-05 CCO-00 DHA-02 OC-06 OPR-02 MCT-01 SCA-01
SCS-03 SY-05 USSS-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 FBO-02
CU-02 /094 W

-----161328Z 110445 /40

O 160930Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1226

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL KARACHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 0383

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: CRISIS IN PUNJAB

REF: LAHORE 0371

1. SUMMARY: PPP WORKERS CLASHED WITH OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATORS IN LAHORE APRIL 15, LEAVING AT LEAST THREE DEAD AND ONE HUNDRED WOUNDED. PNA SOURCS PUTS ESTIMATE MUCH HIGHER. PPP OFFICE, CINEMA HOUSE, PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND NUMBER OF SHOPS BURNED. SITUATION ELSEWHERE IN PROVINCE ALSO SERIOUS. POLICE HAD TO OPEN FIRE IN AT LEAST TWO PLACES TO HALT DEMONSTRATORS OR CHECK ARSON. SO FAR, ARMY HAS NOT COME IN. END SUMMARY.

2. PNA MASSED AT LEAST 50,000 DEMONSTRATORS IN LAHORE YES-TERDAY (APRIL 15) WHEN FIVE PEACEFUL PROCESSIONS CONVERGED ON THE MALL IN THE MAIN DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA. (SOME PAPERS PUT NUMBER, INCLUDING THOSE WHO CAME OUT FROM NEIGHBORING MOSQUES, AT OVER 100,000.) CROWD HAD JUST ABOUT BROKEN UP AROUND 1700
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HOURS WHEN WORD REPORTEDLY REACHED IT THAT PPP ELEMENTS HAD ATTACKED SHOP OWNED BY A LOCAL OPPOSITION LEADER ELSEWHERE IN TOWN AND BROKEN LEGS OF A JAMAATI-ISLAMI MAULANA (UNIDENTIFIED) INSIDE A MOSQUE. INFURIATED GROUP OF OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATORS ABOUT 5,000 STRONG LEFT MALL AND RETALIATED BY ATTACKING A CINEMA HOUSE OWNED BY PPP MEMBER ON MCLEOD ROAD, SAME ONE THEY HAD TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO BURN DOWN DAY BEFORE. PPP

ELEMENTS OPENED FIRE FROM ROOF OF BUILDING AND HURLED ACID DOWN ON CROWD. DESPITE TAKING SOME 60 CASUALTIES (PAK TIMES FIGURES), DEMONSTRATORS FORCED WAY INSIDE AND SET BUILDING ON FIRE. EIGHT CARS AND A POLICE BUS GOT BURNED IN SAME COMPOUND. DEMONSTRATORS MOVED FURTHER DOWN STREET WHERE THEY DREW FIRE FROM A PPP OFFICE WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED ARSON. UNDETERRED, CROWD STORMED BUILDING AND SET IT ALIGHT. PPP WORKER WAS STABBED AND KILLED INSIDE AND BODY DRAGGED ONTO STREET. ANOTHER 40 PERSONS REPORTEDLY GOT SHOT DURING THIS ENCOUNTER. SEVEN NEARBY SHOPS AND A HOUSE WERE ALSO BURNED. LATTER WAS ATTACKED WHEN OCCUPANTS, PRESUMABLY PPP SUPPORTERS, OPENED FIRE ON PNA CROWD. WHEN POLICE ARRIVED TO TRY TO BREAK THINGS UP, DEMONSTRATORS RESPONDED WITH BRICKBATS AND WOUNDED NINE POLICE WITH A HAND GRENADE. LATHI CHARGE WAS REQUIRED TO DISPERSE CROWD AND MAKE WAY FOR FIRE BRIGADE. ELSEWHERE IN CITY TWO UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS TOSSED A GRENADE AT RESIDENCE OWNED BY EDITOR OF PRO-GOVERNMENT URDU DAIG MASHRIQ. DAMAGE WAS MINOR AND NO ONE WAS INJURED. COMPLETE HARTAL WAS OBSERVED.

3. PPP SOURCE INFORMED CONGEN THAT THREE FSF WERE KILLED IN FIGHTING ON PPP SIDE. ABOUT A THOUSAND FSF, HE CLAIMED, HAD BEEN ARMED AND SENT INTO STREET IN PLAINCLOTHES WITH ORDERS TO SHOOT AS NECESSARY. RELIABLE OPPOSITION CONTACT (M. ANWAR) ESTIMATES THAT AT LEAST 18 PEOPLE WERE SHOT DEAD AND OVER 150 WOUNDED. GI EN SIZE OF ENCOUNTERS, THESE FIGURES APPEAR MORE CREDIBLE THAN OFFICIAL ONES. WHATEVER THE NUMBER, IT APPEARS THAT VIOLENCE WAS LARGELY PPP INSPIRED.

4. VIOLENCE BROKE OUT AFRESH IN A NUMBER OF OTHER TOWNS IN
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THE PROVINCE. POLICE OPENED FIRE AND KILLED AT LEAST THREE PERSONS IN JAMPUR (D.G. KHAN DISTRICT) WHEN DEMONSTRATORS BEGAN TO HURL BRICKBATS AND FIRE BOMBS AT THEM. SEVERAL OTHERS WERE WOUNDED. A LAWYER WAS KILLED BY POLICE BULLETS IN SHAKKAGARH (SIALKOT DISTRICT) AND ANOTHER BADLY WOUNDED DURING PROTEST MARCH. IN SARGODHA, NEARLY 100 PERSONS WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED IN HEAVY LATHI CHARGE AFTER DEMONSTRATORS BURNED A POLICE VAN. POLICE DETAINED EIGHT OPPOSITION WORKERS IN SAHIWAL FOLLOWING ARSON AND LOOTING. STUDENTS ATTEMPTED TO BURN A BUS IN GUJRAT, BUT WERE BEATED BACK BY POLICE. HOWEVER, THEY SUCCEEDED IN DAMAGING A BANK. RAILWAY STATION AND PPP OFFICE WERE ATTACKED BY PNA SUPPORTERS IN RAHIMYAR KHAN. IN BAHAWALPUR, DEMONSTRATORS BRICKBATTED BANKS AND RANSACKED A LIQUOR STORE. SIMILAR PROTESTS OCCURRED IN OTHER PLACEU AS PPP GOVERNMENT REMAINS UNDER ATTACK PROVINCE-WIDE.

5. DESPITE CONTINUING BLOODSHED, ARMY HAS NOT COME IN. SOME BELIEVE IT HAS REFUSED TO DO SO. OTHERS SAY PM HAS NOT GIVEN ORDER YET. PUNJABIS ANXIOUSLY AWAIT BHUTTO'S MESSAGE TO NATION

SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY (APRIL 17) IN HOPE IT MAY LEAD TO END OF
CRISIS WHICH IS BEGINNING TO THREATEN CIVIL WAR.
GAMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LAHORE00383
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770133-0248
Format: TEL
From: LAHORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770450/aaaabrfg.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d7e6cba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LAHORE 371
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2787303
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CRISIS IN PUNJAB
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PK
To: STATE ISLAMABAD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d7e6cba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009